

The West Africa Study Circle

St. Helena & Ascension Supplement No. 36



The West Africa Study Circle

ST. HELENA AND ASCENSION SUPPLEMENT

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The West Africa Study Circle

St. Helena and Ascension Supplement
Number 36 July 2001

EDITORIAL

1863 Imperforate One Penny
Shorter Surcharge, SG 3

See article on page 10



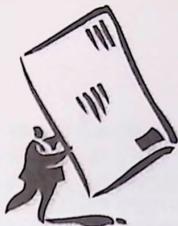
You will find that this issue has a high postal history and cover bias, but the range is just about as wide as it could be. Stefan Hejtz describes two early covers, one of which is the earliest recorded from St Helena! There are also follow-ups from several earlier articles including a nineteenth century cover to the U.S.A., the George Correspondence, Paquebot Marks and the latest airletter, handstamps and cancels from St Helena. To counterbalance this, I have included the article on the 1863 One Penny Surcharges which I held over from the last edition. I hope that most of you find something interesting within these pages - if not, you know what you can do! That's right; send me an article on your pet subject, the more obscure the better. I am particularly looking for articles on Ascension (as always), and the 'middle period' i.e. Edward VII and George V. However, all contributions are welcome - and a big thank you to those who have already sent material.

We have been asked by our President to put on a display of St Helena and Ascension at one of the London meetings next year in either March or November. All members residing in the U.K. should receive an insert giving further details - and a request for volunteers! Any overseas members who may be in London on the dates in question (they will be listed in a forthcoming newsletter) are very welcome to attend to meet fellow enthusiasts and, hopefully, see an interesting array of material.

Barry Burns
20 Tanton Road
Stokesley
Middlesbrough
TS9 5HP

☎ 01642 710636
e-mail bmburns@20tanton.freecserve.co.uk

YOUR LETTERS



Your comments on any letters and articles, or on the style and content of the Supplement are most welcome, as also is correspondence on any philatelic subject which may be of interest to our readership. Please respond via the editor, by letter or e-mail. My addresses are on Page 2.

Specimen Strips

Barry,

I read with interest the debate in Supplement 35 regarding the make up of sets of Specimen stamps from the same position on a sheet. Although not either Ascension or St Helena, I can report a part set of Edward VII Sierra Leone definitives in my collection which shows that the make up of UPU Specimen sets isn't completely random.

My stamps are unusual in that they are in the original vertical strips of five as supplied to the UPU. Of the eight values three are from positions 5, 11, 17, 23 & 29 and the remaining five are from the vertical strip below, i.e. positions 35, 41, 47, 53 & 59. The sheet is in the format of 10 rows of 6 stamps, so my strips are all from column 5 if you work it out.

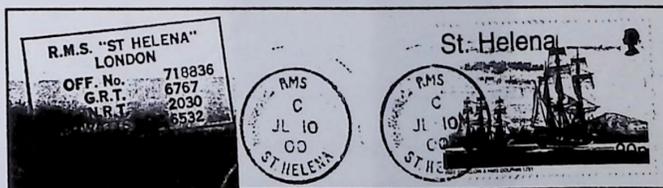
Frank Walton
Via e-mail

R.M.S. Circular Date Stamp, Type 2

Dear Barry,

Following the article in Supplement 35, I enclose a copy of the new air letter sheet which was purchased at the Jamestown Post Office prior to the departure of the buyer on the R.M.S. It was cancelled voluntarily by the postal clerk using the canceller kept at the post office but, as with the local post markers, is rarely used. The sheet was handed back over the counter to the buyer, and the ship registration strike was applied on his voyage to the U.K.

Robert Richardson
New York



Paquebot Cancels

Dear Barry,

My article in Supplement 35 on the Paquebot cancels of Ascension Island questioned the status of two cancels, namely H.2645 and H.2646. Through the good offices of the Maritime Postmark Society, USA, I illustrate two covers showing the use of H.2645 in March 1976 (Figure 1) and H.2646 in October 1987 (Figure 2).

Robert Richardson
New York

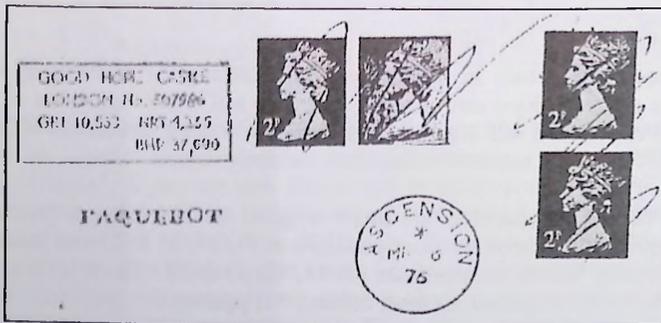


Figure 1 H.2645

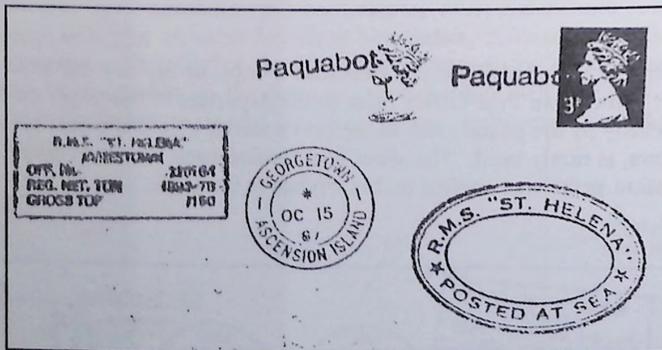


Figure 2 H.2646

ST HELENA PAQUEBOT MARKS

Bernard Mabbett

I enclose a couple of Photostats of St Helena Paquebot marks sent to me by Roger Hosking. Figure 1 shows the mis-spelt Paquabot mark, H.2681 used at St Helena in September 1987 on a philatelic cover franked with G.B. stamps. This now confirms its use at both Ascension (my commercial cover illustrated in Supplement 13 page 25 - and Figure 2 page 4 - Ed) and St Helena. Figure 2 shows the new PAQUEBOT mark used at St. Helena in July 2000.



Figure 1 (above)
H.2681

Figure 2 (right)
New St Helena Mark



1866 COVER TO THE U.S.A.

The Final Solution?

Peter Cottis

This cover was first mentioned in Supplement 30 on page 22. Thanks to Bernard Mabbett and information received from Malcolm Montgomery (a B.N.A. specialist) and Bernard Hughes (Supplement 34, page 12) I have now been able to write the cover up, I hope as accurately as possible.



ST HELENA TO U.S.A.

A Packet Letter franked at 1/8d, and being underpaid 3d, it is cancelled by CNA3 Cork and also bears St Helena oval HS2 in blue dated AU 27 1866. Leaving St Helena on 28th August 1866 aboard the "Celt" the Cover bears a London transit datestamp in Red for 22nd September 1866 and a Red "9" denoting the postage available for onward transmission. Leaving Queenstown on 27th September 1866, aboard the Inman Line "City of New York II" it reached New York on 10th October 1866. On arrival a Red "16 cents" mark was applied indicating there was sufficient to pay the "Ocean" but not the "U.S. Inland" postage, hence the "5c" October 10th 1866 N. York Am. Pkt. handstamp in Black, denoting the underpaid proportion of the postage to be collected upon delivery.

1676 - EARLIEST KNOWN LETTER FROM ST HELENA

Stefan Heijtz

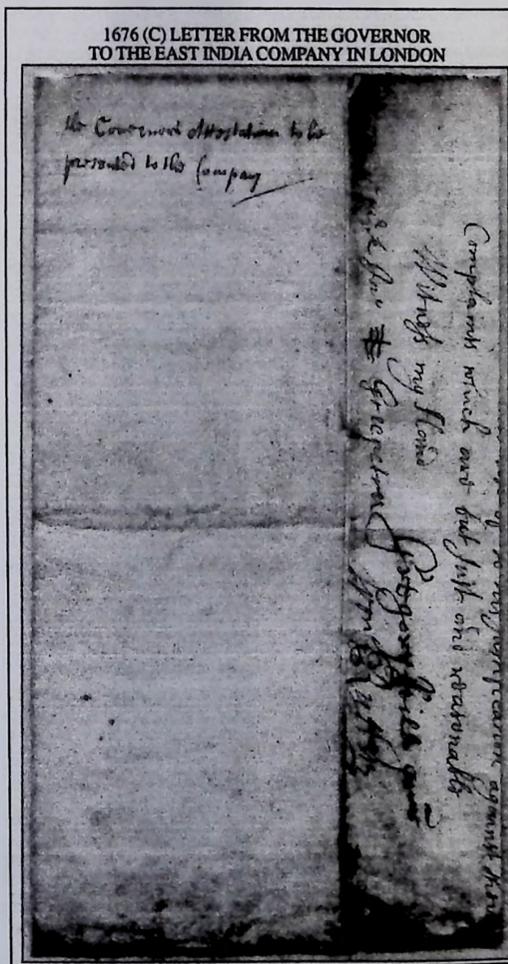
This is the earliest recorded letter from St Helena, circa 1676, and although it does not bear any postal markings as such, it is still a very important item. It was part of Willcock's fabulous collection of early pre-stamp items and was sold at Cavendish fairly recently.

In 1657 the decision to take possession of St Helena was taken by the English East India Company. However, the first settlement was not commenced until 4 May 1659 when the ships *Marmaduke* and *London* arrived with Captain John Dutton as the first Governor. The number of inhabitants was small for many years and by 1676 the population had risen to 390 people.

Captain Gregory Field was appointed Governor by the London Office on 19 December 1673 and he retired during the first half of 1678 and returned to England. Deputy Governor and Keeper of the Stores during this period was Anthony Beale who had been Governor before the Dutch occupation in early 1673.

RATE:

None, carried with other despatches by one of the East India Company's ships to London.



COMMENT:

The letter is marked *The Governor's Attestation to be presented to the Company* regarding the behaviour of Captain Anthony Beale:

Wee whose names are underwritten do testifie: That whereas it is reported that there hath been several complaints made of Anthony Bealle by the Inhabitants of this place tending much to the blasting of his reputation and Credit whereupon a Generall Consultation being Called and notice given to all the Inhabitants to bring in their declarations how he had wronged them whether in their accounts or by way of defraud or oppression &c, that being known reparation might be made and upon strict examination, there was not one person that could declare or prove anything wherein he had wronged them in the least.

So that it was made plainly appoire (?) that what was spoken against him was only by scurrilous persons and through false suppositions of Idle brains.

Given under our hands.

Now whereas at the Instance of Capt Beall I did subscribe to the paper whereof this above is a true Coppy, I must begg leave to interpret in what sense I would have my attestation accepted.

By the inhabitants of this place I understand the Planters and Soldiers who indeed upon examination did not accuse him of fraud and oppression though severall of them mentioned injuries of another nature. But I did it, not to vindicate him from what shall be objected against him by the Companie's Chaplain on the Island or the two Astronomers, whom I am witness that Capt Beall has grossly abused, and that without any reall cause wherefore I desire that what I have there attested may not in the least be made use of to his Justification against their Complaints which are but Just and reasonable.

Witness my Hand

Gregory Field Gov'r, Wm Rutter, ye m'k Jno Greenetree.

The Astronomer mentioned was Edmund Halley who visited St Helena in 1676. Mutiny occurred several times in the colony including 1672, 1674 and 1684. William Rutter was one of the leaders in the 1684 mutiny and he was executed in November 1685.

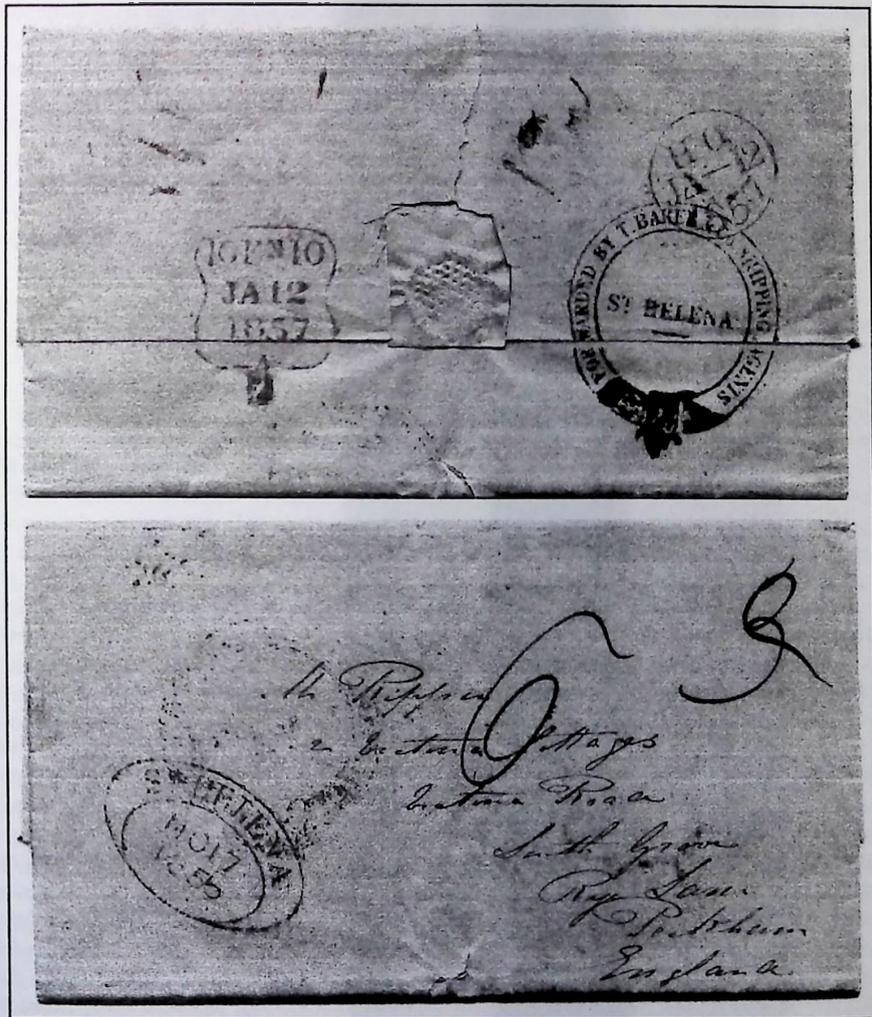


1856 T. BAKER CIRCULAR FORWARDING AGENT CACHET

Stefan Heijtz

It has been suggested that the existence of this cachet on a cover is not well known. The cachet as such is listed in Kenneth Rowe's book on Forwarding Agents, and this cover was part of his collection until he sold it to the previous owner in 1987.

It is an 1856 entire letter dated 5 November in St Helena, to Peckham, England, and it has the ST. HELENA / NO 17 / 1856 oval date stamp in red and is rated "3" (crossed out) and "6" in black. On the reverse is the circular "FORWARDED BY T. BAKER & CO SHIPPING AGENTS / ST HELENA" cachet in red, as well as two arrival markings of 12 January 1857.



THE 1863 ONE PENNY IMPERFORATE SURCHARGES

Barry Burns

Bernard Mabbett raised some interesting points regarding these surcharges in Supplement 32, page 33 which brought a response by Ralph Stanton in the following Supplement on page 8. The issues raised, namely the layout of the forme(s) and the relative scarcity of the two lengths of surcharge, encouraged me to search through the published literature and to look again at my collection. This article is the result, and although not really adding to our knowledge I hope it may be useful to present my findings here.



Figure 1

Short surcharge
Rows 4-5, Columns 6-9
Positions 42-45 and 54-57

Published Literature

The first reference of any significance was published 1906 in *Africa Part III* [1] where the Reference List by W. Dorning Beckton lists the two types of surcharge as 17 mm. in length, 2½ mm. in height and 18½ mm. in length and 2¾ mm. in height. On checking my examples of both surcharges, however, I found all letters to be 2¾ mm. in height. In fact it appears that the letters are similar for both types; the difference in length of surcharge due to the variation in spaces between the letters. Although of no great importance it makes one wonder what Beckton was measuring. He continues: *From an examination of strips and pairs of the stamps, it appears that the sheets were surcharged in blocks of sixty, arranged in five rows of twelve, so that each sheet had to be passed four times through the press. For some reason or other two blocks of sixty overprints were made for the One Penny, one with the short variety of overprint, and the other with the long overprint. Sheets of this value are found with all the stamps showing the first variety, others with all the stamps overprinted with the second variety, while in some cases the two blocks must have been used for the same sheet, as the two varieties are occasionally found se tenant.*

In 1912 Melville [2] agrees with the forme of sixty and the existence of sheets of both types. He also mentions the *se tenant* varieties, including a block of six in the Baron A. de Worms collection in three horizontal pairs; the first and second pairs being of the long surcharge and the lowest pair the short surcharge. Another vertical strip of three showing the same combination (ex Earl of Crawford) is illustrated. However, he disagrees with Beckton *...two (blocks) for the Penny; and these latter differ appreciably in the length of the word and bar, but not in the height of the letters.* He adds the length of the bar occasionally varies to the extent of ½ mm.

Harland in 1913 [3] compounds the situation by reverting to the 2½ mm. figure for the height of the letters in the short surcharge, although generally agreeing with Melville on the surcharge lengths, quoting 17 mm. for ONE PENNY with bar 15¼ - 16½ mm. in the case of the short, and 18½ mm. for both words and bar in the long surcharge. He also mentions the *se tenant* variety, and illustrates the same strip of three as featured in Melville. He goes on to say that the latter part of the quotation from *Africa*, reproduced here on page 10, should read: *that at least one printing was made from a block containing rows of both varieties.* Harland continues: *I have not seen a block large enough to thoroughly work it out, but it seems more probable than printing 120 at a time, or using two machines for the process as would be necessary if the two blocks of sixty were used.*

In 1931 Percy de Worms [4] read a paper to The Royal Philatelic Society based on the records of Perkins Bacon and De La Rue which gave details of the circumstances leading to the production of St Helena stamps by surcharging the Six Pence stamps produced from the original plate. This has been fully documented by Hibbert [5], so I will not dwell further on this topic. However, de Worms also comments... *but in Africa the remarks following the imperforate 1d and 4d suggest that whole sheets of this 1d were known with three variations of surcharge, either all short, all long, or a combination of both. Is a whole sheet known or recorded? It is also stated that two blocks of sixty overprints were made for the One Penny. Is this an ascertained fact? It is most improbable that two different blocks would occasionally have been employed in printing the four impressions needed to surcharge the whole sheet, and since it is now known that only 69 sheets of 1d imperforate were invoiced, it becomes almost certain that there was only one block of 60 which comprised different spacings of the same type, as with the perforated 4d.*

It was left to Mann [6] in 1935 to finally point the way forward. He says of the One Penny Imperforate:

The make-up is given in the Society's work as being a setting in either case of 60, five horizontal rows of 12 stamps. In view of the fact that the two types of surcharge are known se tenant vertically (there is a block shown in the collection), Mr Harland suggested that there was a third (composite) setting. This theory seemed difficult to accept. Needlessly as it turned out, I amassed a number of blocks to see if the problem could not be solved. The se tenant strips, of which I believe there are only two in existence, show the 18½ mm. surcharge in horizontal Rows 11 and 12 of the sheet and the 17 mm. surcharge in horizontal Row 13. Consequently if the setting was not composite the presumption of a setting of four horizontal rows and not five is the

only possible way in which the arrangement on these strips can be explained. For this reason, a setting of either 48 stamps i.e. four horizontal rows of 12, or a smaller setting but still of four horizontal rows, is indicated and this, the obvious solution, is almost certainly the correct one.

Mann then presents the evidence he has assembled; namely the alignment of the surcharges, and the existence of a variety on stamp 48 of the setting, in which the distance between the 'E' of 'ONE' and the 'P' of 'PENNY' are further apart than on the normal stamp. He demonstrates that these occurrences are explained only by a setting of 48. He continues:

The question arises as to why, in view of the small quantities printed, two settings were used for this stamp, and it seems natural to suppose that owing to the irregular laying down of the impressions on the plate, and the consequent irregularity of alignment, it was found that the broad surcharge 'A' was too large for the stamps and that the type was therefore clamped together and setting 'B' subsequently used.

The se tenant varieties must either have come from a sheet incompletely surcharged with setting 'A' or from a sheet especially surcharged to contrast the two widths of surcharge.

I will return to Mann later when discussing the relative scarcity of these stamps, but in the meantime let us move on. I am passing over the next three significant references, namely *The Royal Philatelic Collection* [7], *Perkins, Bacon Records* [8] and *The De La Rue History* [9], not because of their unimportance, but because they are dealt with in the next reference, namely *St Helena* by John Marriott [10]. This excellent review of the stamps of the island up to 1970 is based on material in the Royal Collection, but is so scholarly in its treatment that it should be in the possession of every St Helena collector.

He clarifies the sheet position of the block of 42 with long surcharge in the Royal collection, as the first two rows and the first nine stamps of the third and fourth rows, and not as previously and erroneously given by Mann. He notes that the example of the double shorter surcharge to be from row 12, column 9. This is in agreement with a former setting of 48 in four rows of 12 if we assume the stamps with missing surcharge (which are all from the bottom row) are from the same sheet.

Moving on to the *se tenant* varieties, he notes that the strip of three in the Royal collection is the one illustrated in Melville, and shows the longer surcharge on rows 11 and 12 and the shorter on row 13. He mentions a similar, but unplated, strip in the Agabeg collection, and a block of six in three rows of two, with the lower pair having the shorter surcharge. He continues: *The Donne collection contained four pieces all showing the upper stamps with the longer surcharge and the lower stamps with the shorter. There was a vertical pair; this was originally a strip of three, but the uppermost stamp was removed because it was creased (Figure 2). There were two blocks of four—one presumably ex Mann (with the uppermost two stamps removed) and the other was the one sold at Robson Lowe's on 14 April 1966. There was also a block of eight in two rows of four.*

It has been possible to plate the first of the two blocks of four as the 5th and 6th stamps from rows 12 and 13 (Nos 137-138, 149-150 on the sheet). Thus it is probably from the same sheet as the strip in the Royal collection.

On the other hand I was surprised to find that when the block of eight was plated it proved to consist of the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th stamps from rows 4 and 5 (Nos 42-45, 54-57 on the sheet). This again agrees with the theory that the setting of the longer surcharge was in four rows of twelve. It also lent weight to the idea that there were two separate settings, one of longer the other of shorter surcharges, since the surcharges on row 5 were out of alignment with those on row 4.



Figure 2
Se tenant pair
 Rows 12-13, Column 4
 Positions 136, 148

The pair and other block of four were not plated, as they had been sold to an unknown buyer. However he believes the pair came from rows 12 and 13 as the uppermost stamp from row 11 of the 'Royal' strip is creased, as was the stamp cut off to give the Donne pair, and the two strips had similarly placed surcharges. He emphasizes the point that there are no recorded multiples in which the shorter surcharge is above the longer, and agrees with Mann on the likely reason for the *se tenant* varieties.

His final point to be made in connection with our present discussion is the suggestion that the type and setting for the 1864 One Penny (SG 6) are the same as for the narrow surcharge on the imperforates. However he has insufficient material and is not aware if this has been proven or not.

Finally, on this resume of published literature, we come to Edward Hibbert's standard work [5], published in 1979. He mentions the block of four from the Donne collection and plated by John Marriott, although he quotes columns 6 and 7 instead of 5 and 6. In fairness, however, Marriott had originally misquoted the positions and this was not corrected until after the publication of Hibbert's work. For the record, the correct plating is as listed here. He also plates Donne's block of eight and the strip in the Royal collection. This had not been quoted by Marriott, but was published by Sir John Wilson [7] as column 3 on rows 11, 12 and 13. Hibbert agrees on the setting of 48 and the possibility of the *se tenant* varieties resulting from a sheet specially surcharged to contrast the two surcharge lengths.

Very little has been published in previous Supplements in relation to this particular issue. Roger West discussed the layout of the overprinting formes of all the De La Rue surcharges in Supplement 3, pages 6-7, and followed this with a thorough survey of the process on the Crown CA issues in Supplement 4, pages 7-11. Also in Supplement 9, page 19, whilst discussing the double and missing surcharges, Roger said it has been suggested that the normal practice of

surcharging begins at the top of the sheet, and to work down. He illustrated some fine plated blocks from his own collection in Supplement 9, pages 33-34, and to complete the Supplement survey there are the two articles mentioned in the introduction of this review.

Before attempting to draw any conclusions from all of this, let us now have a look at the scarcity of the issue, with particular emphasis on the relative numbers of the two settings.

Relative Scarcity

We have already noted the comments by Beckton and Melville concerning the existence of sheets of both surcharge types. If only these were still available! Mann writes: *The number of stamps sent to the Colony did not amount to more than 16,560 as invoiced on June 5th, 1863. In view of the comparatively small number of these stamps issued, it seems strange that single copies are comparatively common in unused condition. Blocks are naturally less common, but this is one of the few early St Helena stamps which is obtainable in this condition, and one is forced to the conclusion that some few sheets must have been found in London which probably never saw St Helena.*

Of course, the One Penny duty was intended to prepay the rate for soldier's letters and newspapers, both of which must have experienced little need. Consequently used stamps are indeed uncommon, and in my personal experience actually quite scarce in genuine used condition. Many examples I have seen exhibit very suspicious cancels.

I have been examining the stamps in my collection, but unfortunately do not possess the plating skills of Ralph Stanton in the case of individual stamps. Nevertheless, my findings can be summarised as follows:

Short Surcharge, SG 3

- 9 unused singles including positions 176, 212 and 212.
- 2 unused pairs, 1 of which is position 2-3.
- 1 unused block of six, positions 76-78, 88-90 (Illustrated page 2).
- 1 unused block of eight, positions 42-45, 54-57 (Figure 1).
- 6 used singles, including position 188.

Long Surcharge, SG 4

- 5 unused singles including position 14.
- 1 unused pair, position 208-209 (Figure 4).
- 1 unused block of six, positions 85-87, 97-99 (Figure 6).
- 3 used singles.

Let us now consider the number of examples appearing at auction over the last twenty years or so. I am only listing the well known sales that I have catalogues for so this is only a rough estimate, but should give a fair indication of the relative distribution of the surcharge types. I am

also including the figures quoted by Bernard, Ralph and myself, and the numbers in the Royal collection as itemised by Wilson [7]. In all cases, I list the pairs and blocks present, but my totals in the final column are based on the individual stamps, eg a block of four is counted as 4. In the table I have omitted the *se tenant* varieties and the block of 42 in the Royal Collection as it would obviously distort the figures somewhat. It is also a certainty that some are listed more than once, but this is difficult to estimate without examining each and every one.

Short Surcharge SG 3

		Unused singles	Unused pairs	Unused Strips/ Blocks	Used singles	Total Unused	Total Used
Royal		4	2	4 x 1 6 x 1	2	18	2
Mabbett		1	1	4 x 1	2	7	2
Stanton						19 [A]	
Burns		9	2	6 x 1 8 x 1	6	27	6
Hibbert	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	2			1	2	1
Lampart	Gibbons 1986	3		3 x 1		6	
Jamestown/Ayre	Harmers 1989	7	2	4 x 2 6 x 1 8 x 1		33	
Dekker	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	4				4	
	Phillips 1990	6		4 x 1	2	10	2
Justine	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	16	2	4 x 4 6 x 1		42	
TOTAL						176	13

Table 1

Long Surcharge SG 4

		Unused singles	Unused pairs	Unused Strips/ Blocks	Used singles	Total Unused	Total Used
Royal		3	1	4 x 2 8 x 1	1	21	1
Mabbett		5			2	5	2
Stanton						5 [A]	
Burns		5	1	6 x 1	3	13	3
Hibbert	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	1			1	1	1
Lampart	Gibbons 1986						
Jamestown/Ayre	Harmers 1989	3	3	6 x 1	3	15	3
Dekker	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	3		4 x 1		7	
	Phillips 1990	7			2	7	2
Justine	Christie's Robson Lowe 1984	13	2	4 x 1 6 x 1		27	
TOTAL						103	9

Table 2

[A] Total includes both unused and used.

Discussion

The evidence for the use of two formes, each of four rows of twelve is irrefutable. The sheet positions of the *se tenant* varieties; the double and missing surcharges; the findings of Mann in relation to stamp 48 and the alignment of the surcharges, all rule out the use of a five row forme. Figure 1 shows a block from the fourth and fifth rows. Note the positioning of the surcharge in

the lower row - it is misplaced a full millimetre to the left of that in the upper row. A setting of sixty could not give this.

When we look at the reason and layout for the *se tenant* varieties the position is more uncertain. It is clear that there are not many recorded examples, and I would be surprised if there are many more to surface. In all cases the lower stamp is the shorter surcharge, and occurs in either row 5 or 13. If we assume, as seems likely, that they resulted from a trial by De La Rue to compare the surcharges, this can be explained by either of the following scenarios:

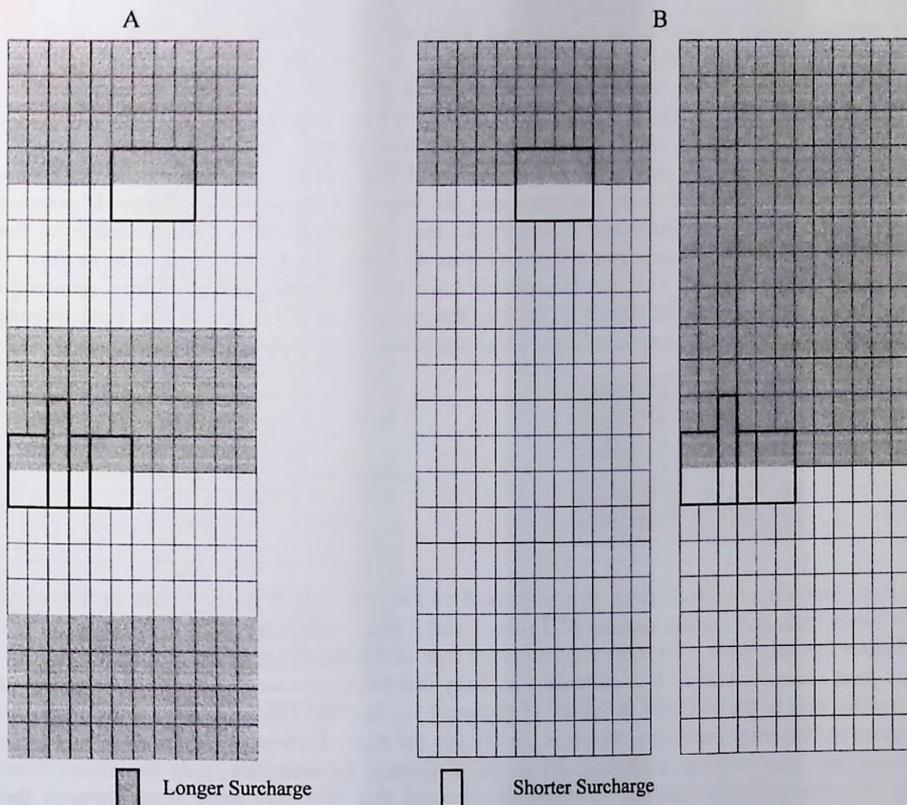


Figure 3

In 'A' (Figure 3) the bottom 4 rows of the sheet could be either the long or short surcharge. If however this format was not that adopted then at least two sheets would be necessary as shown in 'B'. I find it difficult to accept 'A' as it would seem likely that pairs would exist in which the lower stamp was the long surcharge, bearing in mind the sheet appears to have been divided with the intention of retaining *se tenant* pairs.

I have indicated the position of the plated examples on the sheets in Figure 3. The Jamestown / Ayre collection contained two blocks of four, and, although not described in the catalogue, I have plated as from Rows 12-13, Columns 1-2 and 5-6. The former **may** be the unplated block ex Donne, and the latter is the Mann/Donne block already identified. This leaves only the Baron A. de Worms vertical block of six (but was this the block described by Marriott as cut down to four?) and the Agabeg pair—both of which could be accommodated in the ‘A’ or ‘B’ layout unless the plating indicates otherwise.

The question arises of course, as to why and when such a trial may have been carried out. Despite being in the printing business since 1813, it may be that De La Rue had very little experience in overprinting, particularly of stamps. In their history [9] the first reference to overprinting is....1863 St Helena! This may account for the large number of different essays produced on the Six Pence blue. If they carried out the trial before the actual printing started, then why use two settings of the same ‘type’? But if this was the case, then it is likely they would have decided on the short surcharge and the longer variety would be rare. If printing started with the long surcharge and it was found that the printer had difficulty lining up the sixpence sheets with the overprinting forme (Figure 4) it may have been decided to perform a trial *during* the print run. This would probably have resulted in a quantity of long surcharge sheets from before the trial, which I believe the most likely situation. The Four Pence, incidentally, has an even shorter surcharge which suggests it was printed after the One Penny.



Figure 4
Long surcharge, misplaced to left
Row 18, Columns 4-5
Positions 208,209

Beckton, Melville and Mann have all commented on the existence of either sheets or blocks of both surcharges, and a quick perusal of Tables 1 and 2 will confirm the latter. Most collectors will agree that this issue is far more common mint than all the other stamps printed from the plate *apart from the remainders*. It is extremely unlikely that full sheets were retained by the Crown Agents for sale to philatelists - in 1863! If this were so, then the 1864-80 series would also be common in fine mint condition, which is clearly not the case. However, De La Rue may have retained their trial printing, including the *se tenant* sheet(s) for reference, only to release them later onto the philatelic market. I originally thought that this may have been through the remainders advertised by the Crown Agents in January 1898, but the One Penny in that batch was supposedly on Crown CA paper.

Let us now look at the distribution of the known plated blocks, but first let me correct that illustrated by Roger West in Supplement 9 which he now confirms as being 3/7 to 4/10 instead of 4/6 to 5/9. Figure 5 shows the distribution of all the recorded plated blocks listed in Table 1, on sheet images of the long and short surcharges, and it can be seen that in each case there are two

overlapping blocks. For the long surcharge, one of these blocks could have originated in a full sheet of such; the other from one of the *se tenant* sheets shown in Figure 3. However, in the case of the short surcharge this would not have been possible, so that there were probably at least two sheets of the short surcharge available, as implied by Beckton and Melville.

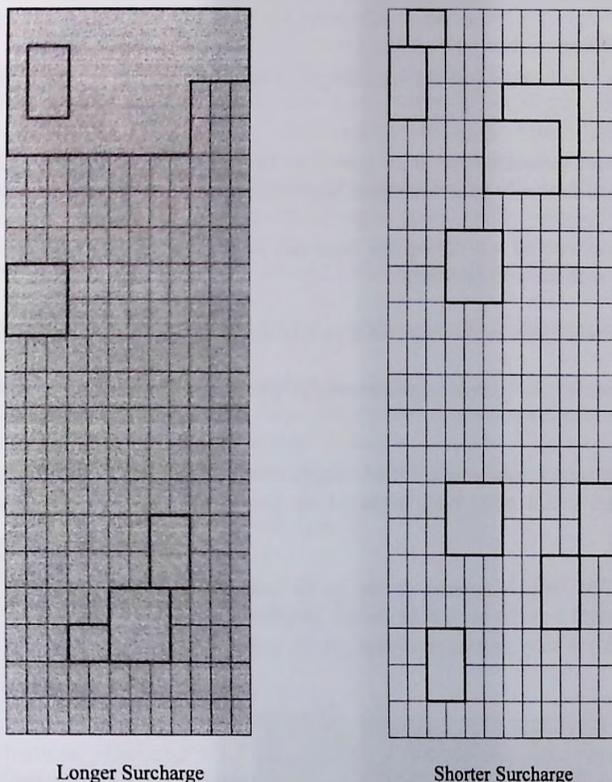


Figure 5

Returning to the relative distribution of the two surcharge types, I am convinced that the longer surcharge is the scarcer of the two, although probably not quite the order of Ralph Stanton's distribution (5 to 19). Tables 1 and 2 suggest 103 to 176, but ignoring the multiples - which tend to distort the figures - gives 52 to 65. I imagine the actual distribution to be somewhere between these values, say 2 to 3, indicating that Gibbons should increase the price differential a little.

I have already suggested that used copies are scarce, and the tables show that for single stamps this is at a ratio of 3 or 4 to 1. In fact these two stamps, together with the clean-cut Six Pence and the Imperforate Four Pence, are probably the most difficult from the plate to find in really fine, genuine used condition, and in the case of the One Penny worth a substantial premium over mint.

Conclusions

1. There were two formes, one for each length of surcharge, and each consisting of four rows of twelve.
2. The *se tenant* varieties came from a trial by De la Rue to assess the best format for the overprinting. Probably only two sheets received the two lengths of surcharge.
2. The trial was carried out during the print run in order to improve the registration of the surcharges with the printed stamps.
4. The long surcharge is the scarcer of the two, possibly by a ratio of around 2 to 3.
5. For both surcharges, genuine used examples are much scarcer than unused - unusual for early issues of this colony.
6. The relative easy availability of blocks suggests that complete sheets were available in the U.K. These could have been released by De la Rue following the surcharging trial suggested.

Apart from the first, which appears to me to be indisputable, most of these conclusions are speculative although they do appear to fit the available facts. I eagerly await comments from readers, particularly if they prove me wrong!



Figure 6

Long Surcharge
Rows 8-9, Columns 1-3
Positions 85-87, 97-99

References

- 1 *The Postage Stamps, Envelopes, Wrappers, Postcards and Telegraph Stamps of the British Colonies, Possessions and Protectorates in Africa, Part III*, pages 324-325. Published for the Philatelic Society, London by Stanley Gibbons Limited. London 1906
- 2 Melville Fred J., *St Helena*. Melville Stamp Books. London 1912
- 3 Harland H. H., *The Postage Stamps of St Helena* from *The Postage Stamp*, 20 December 1913 to 15 August 1914, whole numbers 325-327. London 1913
- 4 de Worms Percy, *St Helena - Records from the Colonial Office, Messrs Perkins, Bacon & Co and Messrs De La Rue and Co*. The London Philatelist, March 1931, Volume 40 Number 471, page 54. London 1931
- 5 Hibbert Edward, *St Helena, Postal History and Stamps*. Robson Lowe Ltd. London 1979
- 6 Mann E. W., *St Helena*. The London Philatelist, January 1935, Volume 44, Number 517. London 1935
- 7 Wilson Sir John, Bt, CVO, *The Royal Philatelic Collection*. The Dropmore Press. London 1952
- 8 de Worms Percy, *Perkins, Bacon Records* - extracted with a commentary. The Royal Philatelic Society. London 1953
- 9 Easton John, *The De La Rue History of British and Foreign Postage Stamps 1855 to 1901*. Published by Faber and Faber for the Royal Philatelic Society. London 1958
- 10 Marriott John B., *St Helena*. The London Philatelist, January 1974, Volume 83, Number 973, also March/April 1979, Volume 85, Numbers 1035-1036. London 1974;1979



EAST INDIAMEN AT ST HELENA 1600 - 1834 New Sources for St Helena-watchers

Trevor Hearl

Major studies of East India Company shipping recently published will be welcome new sources for maritime and postal historians, especially St Helena specialists. The significance for the latter of having readily accessible data on 'John Company's' maritime service, of course, is that the Island was the only safe haven, and an obligatory port of call, for every East Indiaman on its perilous voyage from the Orient. Indeed this was the only justification for its occupation by Britain!

For an authoritative account of Company shipping there has been nothing to beat Jean Sutton's richly illustrated and eminently readable *Lords of the East* since its first appearance in 1981. Conway Maritime Press has now published an even more sumptuous second edition, revised and extended, fully illustrated throughout, including 16 pages in colour. "No finer fleet of

merchantmen ever sailed the seas”, declared Sir Evan Cotton, an earlier authority on the subject in 1939, and here we have the latest research into building, manning, financing, sailing and operating, supported by appendices of factual data, including the size, voyages and dates of over 1240 vessels in the Company’s service. There are chapters on the Company’s steamers, its “navy” and on the peculiar problems of navigating distant waters, such as making a voyage “to China direct”. Helpful sketch maps of sailing routes and prevailing winds should help scotch the common historical gaffe that St Helena was on the East Indiamen’s route TO the East. And eagle-eyed readers who doubt the date of the Island’s acquisition given in the caption to Pocock’s colourful panorama are right; it is still 1659!

The building of East Indiamen is the subject of an attractive and informative volume, published by Anthony Nelson, in which John Barnard tells the story of the ‘Barnard Dynasty’ of shipbuilders at Ipswich, Harwich and Deptford. Over 200 vessels were launched at their yards for the East India Company’s service and the Royal Navy between the 1690’s and 1850’s, including *HMS Northumberland* which took Napoleon to St Helena. This fully illustrated and annotated study illumines a neglected topic told, for all its technical detail, with a grace and clarity which readers will find a pleasure to peruse.

Researchers seeking even more detailed data can now turn to two British Library compendiums compiled by Anthony Farrington, former custodian of Company records at the old India Office Library. These list the voyages and officers of every East Indiaman in the Company’s service, enabling postal and maritime historians, for example, to pinpoint the dates when any particular vessel made St Helena, or any other port of call, between 1600 and 1834.

The *Catalogue of East India Company’s Ships’ Journals and Logs 1600-1834* follows no fewer than 4,563 voyages by 1,577 ships, until the ending of the China trade monopoly under the India Act of 1833 which enabled the Company, with much relief, to abandon St Helena to the care of the Crown. The *Catalogue* is arranged alphabetically by ships’ names, giving the builder, managing owner and ‘vital statistics’ of each, its voyages, captains and ports of call - rarely without St Helena - adding such incidental facts as its fate if wrecked or captured. Appendices give this information in alternative formats, listing ships by season, and under their shipbuilders and principal managing owners (from 1760), including those chartered in Asia for single voyages to London. The last Indiaman at St Helena was apparently the *David Clark* on 4 May 1834.

The main sources for this 790 page *Catalogue* are, as its title indicates, the Journals and Logbooks deposited at East India House by ships’ commanders at the end of each voyage. Not all survived the Company’s closure in 1858, however, and other sources have been combed to cover the losses, most obviously Hardy’s *Register of Ships*. Private ships in the East India trade, such as Tristan’s *Blenden Hall* wrecked on Inaccessible Island in 1821, do not qualify, unless sailing “in the Company’s service”. Though it is now probably impossible to identify every voyage of every ship, even from the British Library’s incomparable sources, there is still one untapped source which would have helped fill the gaps had it not lain neglected in a distant dungeon!



East Indiamen Leaving St Helena 1788

The *Neptune* Indiaman (809 tons) at St Helena, homeward bound from China
From an aquatint by Robert Dodd (1748-1816) published by Robert Sayer, Fleet Street, 1 May 1788

Among the Castle Archives in Jamestown are the Register Master's shipping lists recording every vessel calling at St Helena from 1673, through the years when it was at the hub of the South Atlantic sea routes. Until recently this unique resource of international significance has remained untouched, but in 1994 it yielded its first title, *The First 'St Helena'* by Barbara Montgomerie and now, in the wake of the Millennium, Robin Gill, co-author of *St Helena 500*, has transcribed the records of the 17th and 18th centuries, hoping to return in due course to tackle the 19th century. From the rare surviving copies of St Helena's published 'Shipping Intelligence' it is clear that they would have provided a valuable supplement to the British Library's London sources. Checking the years 1829 and 1832-3, I found that though most of the *Catalogue's* entries were confirmed, a significant number were not. Some dates of arrival at St Helena differed by anything from one to five days so that, for example, the *Dunira* was actually well on her way towards Ascension on the date given for her at St Helena in the *Catalogue* (27 February 1833). It omitted St Helena as a port of call for at least eight ships which, according to Jamestown's records, spent two or three days there, while two other ships in 1829, *HCCS Maria* and *Rockingham* (2), had no entry at all. The scant entry for the Island's packet schooner *St Helena* is less excusable - fewer than 20 of its 64 voyages were noted - given that Barbara Montgomerie's full history, published in Bristol, was readily available for reference.

The *Catalogue* will, nevertheless, provide a versatile tool for researchers and prompt new lines of enquiry. For example, it reveals some unexpected ports of call for East Indiamen such as the

Albemarle in 1761 which sailed from St Helena to Rio de Janeiro before making for home, only to be wrecked off Polperro in its case. And in the 1830's it is noticeable that several ships left St Helena for Halifax or Quebec. The Company's trading links with Canada would seem to require investigation in view of Alexander Dalrymple's proposals in 1789 to develop the fur trade in a joint venture with the Hudson's Bay Company, as only one of the standard works on 'John Company', an American Stanford University study by Marguerite E. Wilbur in 1945, even mentions the Company's interest in Canada. Sir Evan Cotton's *East Indiamen (1949)* does, however, note that the *Elizabeth* in 1834 returned "from China by way of Canada" - though in fact via St Helena - later to be wrecked in the St Lawrence laden with timber. As the British Library's *Catalogue* leaves that ship safely anchored at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 18 August, I conclude that its contract with the Company expired there on disposing of its cargo. There seems plenty of scope for delving into the Company's operations.

The British Library's companion *Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers 1600 - 1834* provides career outlines, with varying amounts of biographical detail, of some 12,000 "commanders, mates, surgeons and pursers", of the ships listed in the *Catalogue*. Checking the entries against the crew list in a *Rockingham (1)* logbook (1791 - 93), I found the profiles of its fourteen officers, including the most junior midshipman, with only one discrepancy - Andrew Morrison, 6th mate, was given as Henry Morrison. Though history is said to be "about chaps", historians know only too well how difficult it is getting to know the 'dramatis personae' of past events, nowhere more so than at St Helena. This prolific mine of biographical information will be a boon to a wide range of researchers beyond Maritime and family historians. Specialist tomes on this scale do not come cheap, however, and at £85 each these 'good companions' may not be as readily accessible as all might wish. Nevertheless these first-rate publications should give the Company's maritime operations firm foundations on which researchers can build and not least provide a deeper understanding of St Helena's role therein.

Works noted:

Sutton Jean, *Lords of the East. The East India Company and its Ships*. Conway Maritime Press, 2000. ISBN 0 85177 786 4 pp. 160 £28.00

Barnard John, *Building Britain's Wooden Walls. The Barnard Dynasty c1697 - 1851*. Anthony Nelson, Oswestry, 1997. ISBN 0 904614 63 8 pp. 120 £20.00

Montgomerie Barbara, *The First 'St Helena'. The East India Company Schooner St Helena 1814 - 1830*. Bristol, 1994. ISBN 1 899489 00 2 pp. 190 £8.00

Farrington Anthony, *Catalogue of East India Company Ships' Journals and Logs 1600 - 1834*. The British Library, London, 1999. ISBN 0 7123 4646 5 pp. 789 £85.00

Farrington A., *A Biographical Index of East India Company Maritime Service Officers 1600 - 1834*. The British Library, London, 1999. ISBN 0 7123 4647 3 pp. 886 £85.00

THE 'GEORGE' CORRESPONDENCE

Peter Cottis

I have recently been looking at some past Supplements and came across the article by Trevor Hearl in number 26 entitled *Discovering 'The Limes' - The 'George' Correspondence*.

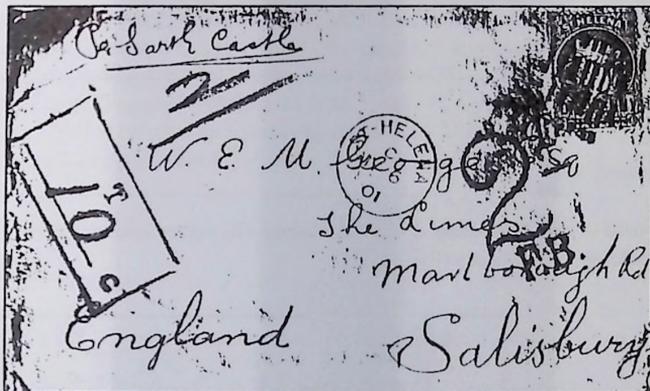
I have assumed the said Edmund George was married to Mrs. E. George (cover illustrated in Figure 4, page 27), and therefore this to be a normal family correspondence! I believe they had three children: 2 sons R. M. and W. E. M. George, and a daughter M. S. M. George. The common initial 'M' stands for Marven; could this be their mother's maiden name?

Figure 1

Underpaid cover to England with 1st type Postage Due handstamp. MS 10 inserted with MS 2 alongside. Foreign Branch 2D/FB handstamp applied in England.

Rate to England was 1d per ½ oz. Letter underpaid by 1d; postage due double the deficiency.

B/S Salisbury 23 May 1901



R. M. George would have left home first to work on St Helena, and my first cover (Figure 1), dated 6 May 1901 is to his brother, W. E. M. George. It would appear that he too then left home, as my next four covers are all to his sister! :

15 October 1901	to	Miss M. S. M. George
10 April 1902	to	Miss M. S. Marven George
31 May 1903	to	Mabel S. Marven George
4 April 1904	to	Miss M. S. M. George

My final cover (Figure 2) proves some, if not all, of the foregoing. It is from Salisbury, dated 10 March 1905, to R. Marven George at Bamboo Hedge, St Helena, presumably from his sister!

I am aware that at least one cover (with unclear date) exists addressed to W. E. M. George at The Limes, **Wyndham Rd.**, Salisbury. I wonder where that is?

Other members with covers from this Correspondence may have contrasting opinions. If so, let's hear them!

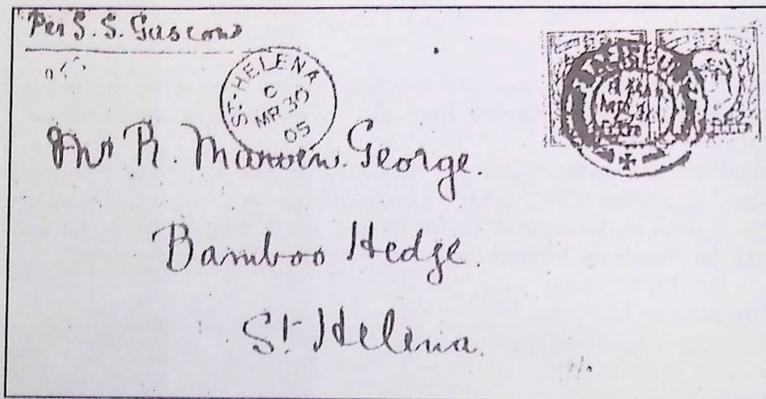


Figure 2

Editor's note:

I have a part letterhead of the St Helena Guardian addressed to E. George Esq at the Corn Exchang(e), Salisbury (Figure 3).

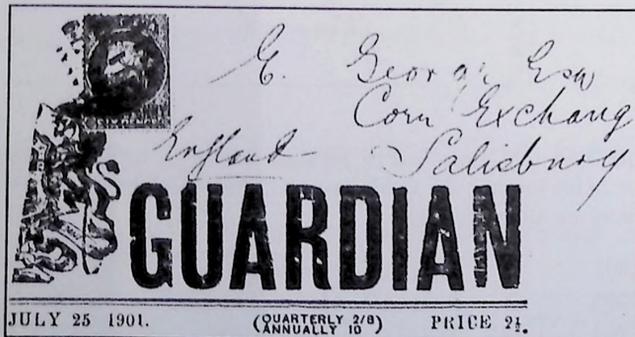


Figure 3

I received the following, unsolicited article from Trevor Hearl just as I was applying the final touches to this Supplement, the content and layout of which have been hurriedly changed in order to include it here as I am sure most of you will wish to read the two articles together. The figure numbers continue, in order to enable cross reference.

THE ‘GEORGE CORRESPONDENCE’ : AUTHOR UNMASKED

Trevor Hearl

The identity of the elusive author of the ‘George Correspondence’ - letters, or rather covers, from St Helena to “Mrs. Edmund George” in Salisbury during the early 1900’s - seems close to being solved. For readers who are not familiar with the story I had better start at the beginning with a brief summary of the case so far.

The St Helena covers in question are addressed to “*The Limes*, Marlborough Rd., Salisbury, England”, and dated at least between February 1901 and 1905. They have intrigued postal historians now for at least twenty years, though presumably not before 1979 as Edward Hibbert was apparently unaware of it when he published his *Postal History and Stamps of St Helena*. [1] Its philatelic interest is enhanced by the writer’s habit, as Bernard Mabbett noted in 1991 [2], of including the name of the mailship on covers (Figure 4). There are also intriguing differences to be found, for example, in the handwriting from St Helena, showing that there were at least three correspondents writing to *The Limes* (Figures 4-6) and, as Ron Young of Australia remarked in 1997 [3], the “mystery deepens” for his cover was addressed, not to Mrs. E. George, but to “Mrs. S. J. H. George” (Figure 5). Now I can add a third, “Miss M. S. M. George”.

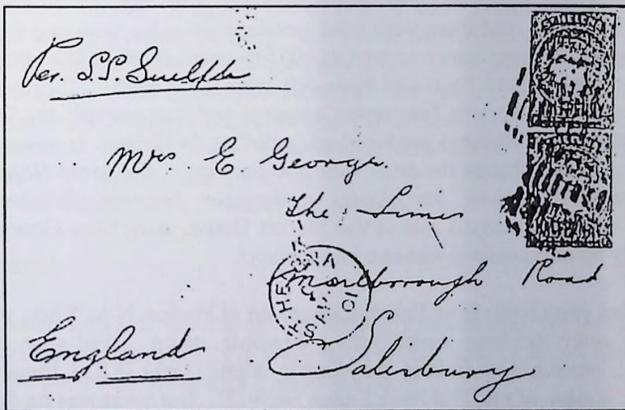


Figure 4

Who were the *Georges* at Salisbury? This question was put to me in 1996 by Michael D. Mueller, then President of the St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society, when a cover addressed to Mrs. E. George was being offered in the South Atlantic auction in October that year. I took a trip to Salisbury and reported my findings in the *South Atlantic Chronicle* in July [4]. From entries in the city’s directories I found that, in 1901, Edmund George was manager of Salisbury Market House (Figure 3 - Ed.), and that several Georges lived

at *The Limes* and next door - numbers 5 and 7 Marlborough Road - between 1897 and 1950, including Miss M. S. M. George, though I did not find a Mrs. S. J. H. George.

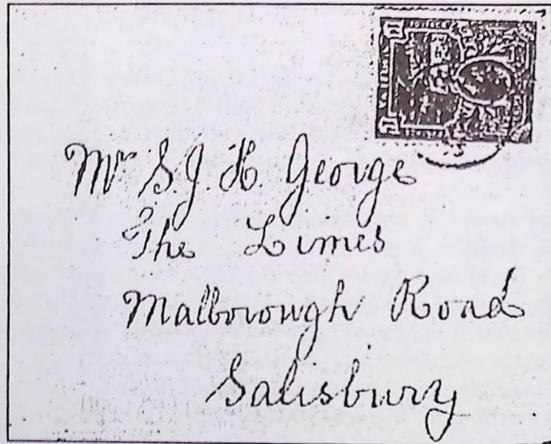


Figure 5

Having traced the recipients in Salisbury, the next task was to find the writer in St Helena. But where to look? As *George* is one of the ten most numerous Island surnames, the chances were that he (or she) was a St Helenian. But there were other possibilities. One was as a Salisbury soldier with the 3rd Wiltshire Regiment which arrived in 1901 to guard Boer PoW's, but unless our man had married and settled there he would have left with the Regiment by mid-1902. Another was as an employee of the Eastern Telegraph Company, and true enough, the Cable & Wireless Company's archivist at Porthcurno produced an 'exile' at St Helena, *Herbert Hillier George*, between 1904 and 1910. Though the dates were not quite right, the name *Hillier* gave him some credence, for Hilliers were the biggest nurserymen between Salisbury and Southampton, and given Edmund George's role at the Market House, may Mrs. George have been a Hillier? How easily do such musings lead one into fantasy!

The first firm clue came last year (2000) from Robert Richardson of Phelps, New York, when he told me that his *George* cover had been sealed with a Masonic stamp. And sure enough, following this up in E. L. Jackson's *St. Helena, the historic island* (1903 [5]), I found R. M. GEORGE listed as Junior Warden of the 'Old Rock Lodge No. 912'. But what was he doing on St Helena? This Lodge, unlike the older 'St Helena Lodge No. 488', was favoured by the military and expatriate civil servants, suggesting that he held some executive position on the Island. Yet he was not listed among government officials, or mentioned as a visiting consultant in any Annual Report. But at least we now had a quarry in our sights.

Another vital clue, in fact, lay long hidden in my philatelic files. In 1985 Mrs. Pauline Brookes of Mendip Philatelics asked me if I could identify the name and address on a 1905 cover to St Helena with a Salisbury postmark, probably linked to others from St Helena addressed to a Mrs. E. George and a Miss Mabel S. Marven George of *The Limes* in Salisbury. Mrs. Brookes'

addressee was none other than “Mr R. Marven George, Bamboo Hedge, St. Helena” (*Figure 2? - Ed.*). But in 1985 this meant nothing to me and I could only assume that a St Helenian family in Salisbury was writing home to relatives at Bamboo Hedge in Sandy Bay. And then, when asked a decade later about a ‘George correspondence’, I had quite forgotten about it - only to be embarrassingly reminded when turning out my old file this week.

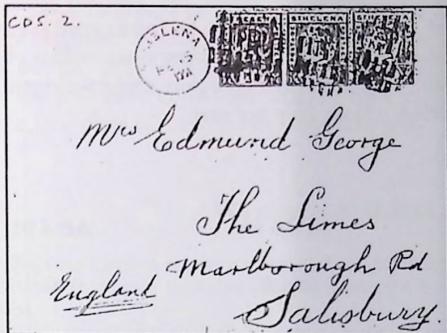


Figure 6

So postal historians can rest assured that *R. Marven George* of Bamboo Hedge was the correspondent. Miss M. S. M. (Mabel S. Marven) George lived at *The Limes* until 1927 when she moved to nearby Swaynes Close at least until 1956. But what took this “agricultural merchant” to St Helena in the early 1900’s remains a mystery. Though Bamboo Hedge was then a modest farmhouse belonging to Solomon & Co. - it became a flax mill in 1913 - it is difficult to imagine it as the home of (say) an expatriate farm manager and his family. Was he engaged in some long-forgotten agricultural enterprise? It would be intriguing to discover. A trawl through the columns of the *St Helena Guardian* in Jamestown or the British Library’s newspaper collection at Colindale, might provide the answer. Otherwise we shall just have to wait, like Dickens’ Mr. Micawber, for “something to turn up”!

References

- 1 Hibbert Edward, *St Helena, Postal History and Stamps*. Robson Lowe Ltd. London 1979
- 2 Mabbett Bernard, *The S. S. Guelph*. St Helena and Ascension Supplement No. 15. January 1991 pp. 17-18 West Africa Study Circle.
- 3 Young Ron, *The George Correspondence: Another piece for the jigsaw?* South Atlantic Chronicle July 1997 p. 6 St Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha Philatelic Society, Inc. Columbus, Ohio.
- 4 Hearl Trevor, *Tracing recipient of St Helena cover in England proves fruitful*. South Atlantic Chronicle, July 1996 p. 23 (see 3)
- 5 Jackson E. L., *St. Helena, the historic island*. Ward Lock. 1903 pp. 301-4 (Lists members of two Masonic Lodges and other societies in 1902.

FORGED CDS CANCELLATIONS ON QV REMAINDERS

Roger B. West

Further to Bernard Mabbett's article in Supplement 35 (page 29) and my own article in Supplement 2 (page 10), there appear to be three dates which may be found used on forged c.d.s cancellations on the St Helena QV remainders. These are listed below along with a check on the ones I have in my own collection. I am sure the table is not complete and I welcome readers to send me (or the editor) any further information. (Note, ns = not seen).

	MY 6 90	MY 6 96	AP 4 01
CC 5s	ns	black	ns
CA 2½d	ns	black	red & black
CA 3d	ns	ns	ns
CA 4d	black	black	red & black
CA 6d	black	black	ns
CA 1s	ns	ns	ns
Key Plate 1½d	ns	ns	ns
Key Plate 2d	ns	black	red & black
Key Plate 2½d	ns	ns	black
Key Plate 5d	ns	black	black
Key Plate 10d	ns	black	black



CURNOW LOSES CONTRACT

Barry Burns

The headline news in June was the loss by Curnow Shipping of the St Helena Line contract to Andrew Weir Shipping Limited. It is likely that many of you already know more details than I can provide, but for those who are still in the dark I reproduce the following announcement as it appeared on the Internet. Only time will tell what effect this may have on postal arrangements and, of course, our planned visit to the island next May.

4 June 2001

AWS secures St Helena contract

Andrew Weir Shipping Limited has been awarded the highly prestigious contract by St Helena Line Limited with the agreement of His Excellency the Governor of St Helena for the management of the RMS St Helena and its Liner Shipping Service.

The ship is the only means of transport to and from the island. It sails between Cardiff and Cape Town calling at Tenerife, St Helena, Ascension Island and Vigo. Once a year the vessel calls at Tristan da Cunha. Its continued regular operation is therefore of paramount importance to the islanders.

While primarily providing St Helenians, visitors and cargo interests with transport to and from the island, the service is also highly regarded as specialist cruising operation because of St Helena's uniqueness in respect of its community, history endemic plants and birds. The vessel is also suited to passengers looking for the experience of traditional cruising on a working cargo ship.

Andrew Weir Shipping has also been selected to provide the marketing and on-shore administration of the passenger service for the St Helena Liner Shipping Service.

Following the August 2001 handover, Andrew Weir will maintain the existing published sailing/cruise itineraries but through the five-year contract period will be exploring opportunities to maximise the passenger businesses for St Helenians, visitors and other passengers. Fully mindful of the island's needs, Andrew Weir Shipping looks forward to working closely with the island communities.

Steve Corkhill, Director of Fleet Management at Andrew Weir Shipping said, "We look forward to providing St Helenians with a 'home-from-home' whilst travelling onboard the ship and to welcoming other passengers experiencing this type of cruise for the first time.

"It is therefore hoped to offer an exciting cruise product for these customers. We will also be focusing on those who have previously travelled on Andrew Weir owned and managed cargo ships and those who have enjoyed sailing on the St Helena in the past."

The contract is another major feather in the cap for Andrew Weir Shipping which was last year confirmed as the bidder for the supply of the six RoRo ferries making up the MOD's Strategic Sealift Service.

Steve Corkhill, underlined the significance of the St Helena contract to the company. "This is one of the most prestigious management contracts to be awarded in the UK this year and it is a real testament to the expertise which Andrew Weir Shipping has and continues to develop in this arena" he said.

"In putting together our approach to the tender, we were able to assemble unrivalled technical expertise, real experience of the challenges facing a service like St Helena Line and an emphasis on quality which we believe is second-to-none.

"Marrying that to the experience we are able to draw on from operating the similar Bank Line service to small islands across the South Pacific and with 150 years' experience in shipping between South Africa, the Iberian Peninsula and the UK there is a real synergy between Andrew Weir and the St Helena Line. We look forward to developing the service further and working with St Helena Line and the highly experienced onboard team."

Mr Corkhill also explained the importance of the contract in the context of Andrew Weir's business strategy.

"We believe that one of our strongest assets is our service level proposition based on quality, expertise and, to an extent, traditional values. Our clients and partners understand these concepts and relate to them. Such propositions would be meaningless without delivery and we take great pride in our reputation not for making promises, but fulfilling them.

"It is that which has enabled us to forge new links for the business and to grow our third-party operation. The SSL and St Helena contract are hugely important business wins and we look forward to being able to announce other equally high-profile contracts in the near future."

When last visited, the Curnow Shipping site had no news of recent events and still displayed details of booking arrangements! Meanwhile, the St Helena News Media website displayed the following:

THE NEW MANAGERS OF THE RMS

Andrew Weir and Company was founded in 1885. Today Andrew Weir Shipping Limited's commercial activities include stevedoring, forwarding, container engineering and the four shipping divisions: Bank Line, Ellerman, MacAndrews and United Baltic Corporation, along with Andrew Weir Agencies. These shipping lines operate a comprehensive network of sea routes serving Europe, the Baltic and CIS, East Africa, the Mediterranean, the Near and Middle East, the South Pacific, Arabian Gulf, Red Sea and India and Pakistan. AWS operates Ro-Ro, container and multipurpose vessels and provides transport services by rail, road and also by air through its CAC Air Cargo Division.

The RMS St Helena will be managed as a project on its own within the Company and with designated staff to take best possible care of the interests of the ship and St Helena. The team will be lead by Mr Andy Parker who is Senior Fleet Superintendent with wide experience from shipping and ship management.

St Helena Herald talked to Mr Parker on Wednesday and asked what changes would be noticeable after 28 August this year, when the RMS is handed over from Curnow Shipping. Mr Parker explained that the aim is to make the hand-over as unnoticeable as possible. The RMS will continue to use Cardiff in Wales as their port of call in UK but other ports might be considered at a later date if it would appear favourable. The company's personnel managers, Bibby International Services, based on the Isle of Man, will employ both the current officers and crew wishing to stay on the RMS. Bibby International Services are managing all Andrew Weir's staff at sea. Mr Parker assured that the Company wanted to give employment opportunities to as many Saints as possible, not only on the RMS but also on other ships in their fleet, which consists of 10 owned ships and further 25-30 under management contracts. This would give Saints a chance to develop their professional experience and would also provide for better career opportunities. New features are that St Helena Line Pty. in Cape Town, which is owned by Curnow Shipping will be replaced by an office under the new managers.

Andrew Weir will seek to bring new and increased trade to the RMS by using their contacts in South Africa and also in Spain and Portugal where the Company has a network of representatives and established contacts. Increased trade for the RMS could lead to financial benefits for all parties involved, including the Island of St Helena. It is anticipated that Solomon & Co will continue as agents for the service, when they have the experience and the necessary staff. The next step in the hand-over process is a meeting with Curnow Shipping, together with St Helena Line, next week. The purpose of this meeting is to get further information about the operation and get access to the Ship records. In mid July, Mr Parker together with a team from Andrew Weir will meet Governor Hollamby in Cape Town and thereafter visit St Helena for the first time.

Mike Olsson



FROM THE SOUTH ATLANTIC

News and Views

This section has been compiled from information received from Beverly Francis, Barbara and Basil George, Trevor Hearl, Stefan Heijtz, Bernard Mabbett and Robert Richardson.

Jamestown stamps

I illustrate the c.d.s. and handstamps which were in use at the Jamestown Post Office on 5 January 2001, courtesy of Beverly Francis. Note the poor quality of the Local Post cancels. The Paquebot mark is also illustrated on cover on page 5. See below for a new Jamestown oval stamp with POST OFFICE inscription!



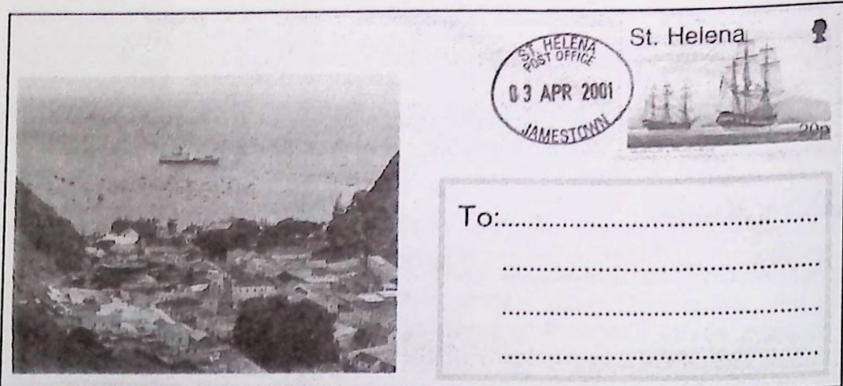
ON POSTAL SERVICE



PAQUEBOT

New Pictorial Airletter and Datestamp

I can now illustrate (page 34) the new airletter first mentioned in Supplement 34. Note particularly the new ST. HELENA / POST OFFICE / JAMESTOWN oval date stamp of 3 April 2001. Should this be designated an Oval or Post Office date stamp? The last recorded use of the latter was 1867!



St. Helena is a tropical island situated in the south Atlantic 16° South of the equator. The island was discovered by the Portuguese in 1502 and named after Emperor Constantine's mother. Later the island became renowned as the place where Napoleon was exiled. The island's location in the south east trades and the volcanic origins have resulted in a flora and fauna found nowhere else. Two examples are the wire bird (above) and the ebony (below). Still today the only way to reach the island is by ship (RMS St. Helena at anchor off Jamestown top) and this has influenced the island history through the centuries.



Stefan Heijtz Auction

Stefan will be holding an auction of Falkland Islands in the autumn, probably October, and will be including some 50 St Helena covers from the period 1900 to 1938 including Boer War, Official Mail and Commercial Mail with correct postal rates. If you are interested, please contact Stefan directly as follows:

E-mail stefan.heijtz@home.se
Web site <http://w1.810.telia.com/~u81002262/stefan/>
Telephone 0046-8108362 (work), 0046-86118727 (home)
Fax 0046-8108361
Mail Box 26048, S-100 41 Stockholm, Sweden

Department Handstamps

I illustrate some of the latest handstamps together with their actual dimensions. These are becoming rather prolific, and I don't envy anyone trying to categorise them all, Bernard!



39 x 24 mm.



39 x 24 mm.



50 x 31 mm.



38 x 27 mm.



50 x 32 mm.



50 x 32 mm.

NEW ISSUES

We collectors often complain of the frequency and inappropriate subjects of stamp issues, but surely nobody can complain at the reason for this set of four stamps from Ascension; details courtesy of the Crown Agents.

ASCENSION ISLAND 500th Anniversary of Discovery

Release Date	25 March 2001
Designer	Julian Vasarhelyi
Printer	BDT International Security Printing Limited
Stamp Size	32.34 x 48.26 mm.
Sheet Format	50 (2 x 25)
Watermark	CA Spiral
Values and Designs	15p Alfonso de Albuquerque 35p Portuguese Caravel 40p Cantino Map 50p Rear Admiral Sir George Cockburn



And Finally

Acknowledgements for information and help this time go to:- P. Cottis, Mrs B. Francis, Mr and Mrs B. George, T. Hearl, S. Heijtz, T. Hills, R. Hosking, Judith, B. Mabbett, M. Olsson, R. Richardson, R. Stanton, F. Walton, R. West, Crown Agents Stamp Bureau, Royal Philatelic Society London, St Helena News Media, SHELCO, Stanley Gibbons Ltd., and to anyone else I may have inadvertently forgotten.

And how long will it be
before Prosperous Bay Plain
welcomes this visitor?

